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THE AMATEUR GEEK

SATURDAY, JANUARY 16, 2010

Paavo John Rahkonen

Via Rocketry Planet comes the sad news that Paavo John Rahkonen, a pioneer in solid-fuel rocketry, passed away in December at age 79.

He was born in Brooklyn, NY, on January 16, 1930 to Finnish immigrants Paarly Johannes Rahkonen and Linda Lujunen. He studied at the USAF Institute of Technology and worked for the Air Force for 6 years, as well as at Republic Aviation, Curtiss-Wright, and Martin (of Lockheed-Martin).

At Morton-Thiokol in Utah, he invented ammonium-perchlorate composite propellant, which powers the Space Shuttle's solid rocket boosters as well as most mid-power and high-power model rocket motors. He met G. Harry Stine in 1963, who introduced his work to the model rocket community, and in 1982 Gary Rosenfield of Aerotech introduced the first commercial composite propellant motor, a G30.

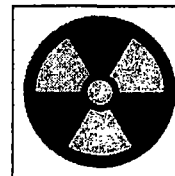
Rahkonen, with his company Propulsion Dynamics (Prodyne) introduced several motors to the market, including D2, E2, and F2 (!) 'Cyclone' motors, and in the early 1990s, a K700 composite motor. At Thiokol, he worked with Irving S. Wait, who with RDC produced the Enerjet motors, and with George Roos who founded FSI, which also made model rocket motors.

He is survived by his wife Francoise and five children, 13 grandchildren, and 6 great-grandchildren. Rest in peace, Paavo, and we salute you for helping make rocketry what it is today.

POSTED BY THE EGE AT 9:01 PM LABELS: [HIGH POWER ROCKETRY](#), [HISTORY DAY](#), [NOTICE](#)

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THE EGE

An otherwise normal mad scientist bent on making the world a better place by taking over.

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